



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

**WELCOME REMARKS BY MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
FOR TATI EAST CONSTITUENCY**

HONOURABLE DR DOUGLAS LETSHOLATHEBE

**AT THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE BOTSWANA LABOUR
MARKET OBSERVATORY GOVERNING BODY**

**FAIRGROUND HOLDINGS - GABORONE
11 OCTOBER 2022**



SALUTATIONS

- Director of Ceremony
- Your Honour the Vice President of the Republic of Botswana and Member of Parliament for Boteti West – Mr Slumber Tsogwane
- Hon. Minister of Labour and Home Affairs and Member of Parliament for Gaborone Bonnington North – Ms Annah Mokgethi
- Representatives of the ILO and other UN Bodies here present
- Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Skills Development – Ms. Miriam Maroba
- Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs – Mr. Jimmy Opelo
- Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance – Dr. Wilfred Mandlebe
- HRDC Board Chair - Ms Choice Pitso
- Ag. Chief Executive Officer, HRDC - Mr. M.J. Tafa
- Heads of Parastatals here present
- Other Senior Government Officials here present
- Captains of Industry, Academicians and Heads of Education and Training Institutions
- CEOs and Heads of Trade Union Movements
- Entertainers – Three Tenors and Moroka Moreri

- Members of the Fourth Estate
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning!

1. **Director of Ceremonies**, it's an honour for me to welcome you all to this momentous occasion. Today's event is meant for you to appreciate the importance of labour market information and data for policy formulation, implementation and monitoring and how it best fits into your respective contexts. I believe from today you will all be eager to add to the body of knowledge and contribute to the "***Building of Labour Market Intelligence for Effective Implementation of Education and Employment Policies***". I believe that the theme has been carefully chosen to highlight the current challenges and the tasks that must be undertaken if we are to successfully confront the threefold challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality that are plaguing our country.

2. **Director of Ceremonies**, as a country we want to ensure that the skills produced currently and in the future are those that will not only grow and develop our economy, but will give young people the capacity to meaningfully contribute and build a better future for themselves. In this regard, the education and training

landscape in our economy is currently being reconfigured following the rationalisation of Ministries a few months ago. The new Ministry of Education and Skills Development is now working to ensure that the two critical segments of our education system blend together smoothly and receive greater attention and dedication from all concerned stakeholders.

3. The merging of the then Ministry of Basic Education and part of the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Research, Science and Technology as well as Ministry of Employment, Labour Productivity, Gender and Skills Development into a single Ministry provides an opportunity to consolidate the national education database and statistics to facilitate education planning and management. My Ministry will now be able to manage the country's education and training system in a more coherent way; recognising the diverse and differentiated school learning systems within the framework of the Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (ETSSP) and the National Human Resource Development Strategy (NHRDS).

4. **Ladies and Gentlemen,** it is quite evident that our country requires critical skills to enable citizens to participate in the new world order of work within the dictates of the 21st Century and to support the economic recovery efforts from the negative

impact of COVID-19. Our economy is still undergoing severe strain following the closure of businesses and job losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We therefore, need to seize this moment and act decisively in re-building our economy through development of targeted critical masses of new skills that will drive innovation and entrepreneurship. The lessons from the current Covid-19 pandemic dictates that we move swiftly in adopting technology and the 4th Industrial Revolution. The utilisation of digital platforms to access services, transact or do business become more imperative to meet the changing market trends. We do not want to be left behind!

5. Such technological disruptions have an equal impact on the current set of jobs in the market. This means that part of our adaptation response must include accelerated training and skills development, in order to keep up with the pace of change, bearing in mind that even jobs that were considered as vocational, are now becoming high tech and require specialised knowledge and skills.

6. **Bagaetsho**, it therefore follows that the skills for the 21st century must be aligned with the dictates of the changing world of work, shaped by realities of automation, artificial intelligence and robotics. In the midst of the fiscal constraints faced by

Government we need to look at how new partnerships and collaboration can increase access to skills development, quality and outcomes in a more cost effective manner. We need to invest more in the review of curricular, upskilling of our trainers to deal with emergent and unknown challenges of the future brought by the 4IR. Clearly, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematical (STEM) subjects have a crucial role to play in equipping students in rapidly developing fields such as genomics, data science, Artificial Intelligence (AI), robotics and nanomaterials, which are all 4IR concepts.

7. **Director of Ceremonies**, as we embark in the transformation of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) we need to ensure that our technical and vocational education system is apprenticeship based. This will guarantee us graduates who would venture into entrepreneurship and create employment. We are experiencing a high number of young people that are Not in Employment, Education or Training adding to the high level of unemployment. We should therefore put in place comprehensive skills development programmes to re-tool and re-skill young people to afford them an opportunity to be productively engaged in the economy.

8. **Distinguished Guests**, let me end my remarks by cautioning that the LMO Governing Body that we are launching today should therefore not be just another committee that will be holding meetings without making any value addition or that will suffer the so-called “lack of implementation syndrome” as known for most of our developmental initiatives in this country. I am thus confident that its output will be tangible, measurable and will go a long way to address challenges and emerging issues affecting our everyday life and the choices that we make within the labour market space; be it by students, parents, investors, employers, institutions and many others.

9. With these few remarks I welcome you all and wish you a productive and interactive day ahead.

10. Thank you. **PULA!**